What's Happening In And About The Yankee Air Force Museum
Hangar Happenin's

Feb
1999

YANKEE AIR FORCE

Yankee Air Museum | P.O. Box 590 | Belleville, MI 48112 | Tel. (734) 483 – 4030

Hangar Happenin's
is a monthly newsletter
for the **Yankee Air Force**

Editors: Bill Abbott, Evelyn Rouse

Computer Publishing: Bob Seaton

Contributors:
Daniel Tomczak, Connie Kosek, Don Burke, Bette Watson, Bill Hanney, Roger Peterson, Mary Ann Bittner, Bernie Hallman, Kevin T. Walsh, Jim Beck

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Meeting Schedule
1st Wednesday of Month – 7:30 PM
General Membership
3rd Wednesday of Month – 7:30 PM
Board Meeting
Public Welcome

MUSEUM **WINTER** HOURS
10 – 4 THURSDAY- FRIDAY- SATURDAY
12 – 4 SUNDAY

EVELYN ROUSE & BILL ABBOTT
Our Editors

From the Editors' Desk:

As you are reading this in the second month of the new year, it is being written in the first week of the new year. That being the case, please forgive us for digressing some.

We just had our Christmas party here at the Hangar. We had a very good turn out; we have claimed total responsibility for this! Actually if it hadn't been for the chance of having it advertised in HH, not as many of you would have even known about it. A good time was had by all, and it also allowed the recognition of the retirement of our B–25 crew chief, Ambrose Connelly Jr. Fred Lockwood, Norm Ellickson, Don Harner, and Dick Bodycombe, each sang the praises of Mr. Connelly. Ambrose assured the assembled throng that even though he would not be the crew chief of the B–25 he would still be around to help where he could.

During the festivities many, well O.K. a few, were kind enough to mention to the staff of your newsletter how much they appreciated our efforts. One of the comments came from a person who, as part of his business, writes a newsletter. It was especially nice to have someone who knows how hard it is to produce a newsletter tell us that we are doing a good job. Later in this issue we have a piece by one of the staff trying to give you an idea of what we do each month to bring you this newsletter. Each time that we receive these nice comments, we know that we are doing the kind of job that you deserve and we try to do each and every month. Thanks! - **The Staff**

Our internet address is:
http://www.yankeeairmuseum.org
Our e-mail address is:
yankeeairmuseum@provide.net

Hangar Happenin's e-mail address is:
seaton@provide.net

Who was that?

As you will recall, last month we had a picture of someone on the back page. As we said: you would not win a prize, but let's see if you figured out who it was! **John Day,** our new vice president. (It doesn't hurt to kiss up to the big guys!) **The year: 1947 at Fort Belvoir, Virginia while John was with the 7071st Provost Marshall unit.** Check out this month's picture and see if you recognize who it is.

Visitors to the Museum
12 Dec 98 - 9 Jan 99
were *from*
12 States

Past Dates of Interest

1 Feb 1952	USAF acquires first general purpose computer
2 Feb 1941	Ford Motor Company develops V-12 aircraft engine
12 Feb 1973	*Operation Homecoming* C-141 POW airlift from Vietnam
15 Feb 1898	Sinking of *USS Maine* in Cuba began Spanish-American War
24 Feb 1944	10,000 graduate AAF school at Willow Run Army Air Base

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Winner of the December meeting
50/50 drawing was
Dean Greene who
donated his prize to Miles O' Pennies

From The Head -- (Office, That Is!)
by **Bill Hanney**

This start of 1999 has been hectic! I'm sure you have all had enough snow shoveling for a while. I know I have. I had to shovel out the doors to the south of the Museum to get in this morning (1/9/99). Fortunately our friendly next door neighbors were able to find the time to plow out most of the snow in the parking lot and north ramp.

We sure know what "Snow Days" are. Even had to close the Museum for lack of people to man the Tour Desk and Gift Shop. I doubt that more than two people even attempted to get into the hangar this past week.

I'd like to compliment the staff of *Hangar Happenin's*. I've been told by several members how much they appreciate the improved appearance and photos. Hats off to Bill, Evelyn, Bob, Mary Ann and the contributing reporters. Before their heads get too big, I'll drop the subject.

We will have a meeting of the American Aviation Historical Society on January 23, 1999 in the meeting room. Todd Hackbarth has all the info on that little show. Check with him.

Don't forget the aircraft polishing party on March 20. No experience required! Bring soft cloths and lots of ambition. We'll even pop for a hot dog or better for lunch. All members and families are invited.

I'll close with our perpetual plea for more help in all areas. It is not necessary for you to have any experience. I'm sure there will be someone who can teach you anything in a short time.

Keep the shiny side up and I'll see you around.

Bill Hanney

DIVISION NEWS-

The following news is from the Mid-Michigan Division newsletter:
Wing Tips Jerry Fantini (GN 01767) Editor

HANGAR NEWS

There's a growing belief that the Mayfield Township Airport Board would like us to remove our F-84 from their grounds. Some on the Board consider them to be an eyesore. They haven't come out and said so as yet but that may not be too far in the future. Also, we are skirting the rules on hangar use. We have everything but an airplane in our hangar. Since we were there before the Board took over the airport operation, we've been kind of "grandfathered" so far, but how long will it last? What we really need is to bring the F-84s over to the museum and build our own hangar.

Due to our financial situation, the Council is very reluctant to spend any funds on acquiring the T-33 from the Benjamin Davis Jr. Aerospace Technical High School near Detroit City Airport. So far, the plane hasn't cost us anything, but how do we get the plane to Lapeer and put back together without spending any money? The $500 ownership transfer fee was taken care of by an anonymous donor. Do we have any other donors out there who could take care of wide load fees and crane rentals? If you can help, give Ralph Gilpin a call; he'll be most anxious to talk to you.

Another factor that came to light on the T-33 was the fact that there's a spare J-33 jet engine included in the deal. While we can't sell the plane or its engine, we could sell the spare. Spare J-33 engine cores can reportedly sell for as much as $50,000. Hmmm.... That kind of money would just about take care of a new hangar.

HOLIDAY DINNER

Yes, we're still planning a Holiday Dinner for early next year. This year the dinner will be in Lapeer at *Edwards*. The dinners there are very good and run around $15.

The date is after the holidays for a couple of reasons. First, to avoid all the chaos during Christmas and New Year's, and second to put something in the gap from New Year's to spring, a slow time of year for most of us.

Right now we're looking at either February 6 or 13. There will be more information in next month's newsletter.

VINYL SIDING

We have some donated vinyl siding to unload. There are around 35 or more squares plus some trim in two slightly different shades of blue. One thought was to keep the siding and use it some day on the museum or other buildings. However, the siding on the museum isn't in bad shape and if anything, it could be painted. Also, the siding is being stored in the hangar and we need the space for other items. We're going to advertise the siding in a local publication asking for $1,000 or best offer. If you're interested, call Rich Pilon.

We now have heat! Fortunately, we haven't needed a lot of heat this fall with the mild weather! The boiler was fired up for the Council/ Membership meeting on Wednesday, December 9th, and after a few hours the house began to warm up. More testing needs to be done to be sure everything works properly.

There's a lot of credit that needs to be passed around for bringing about this accomplishment. People like Jerry Guzick and Andy Robinson who shopped around and found the deal on the

boiler. They were mostly responsible for its installation as well. Jerry Smith helped with some of the wiring and, of course, Bob McKay and Rich Pilon were always around to help out, clean up, and lend moral support. Great job guys!

Regrettably, the Council has accepted the resignation of Dave Hingst. Dave stated in his letter of 12/9/98, "As the airport manager for the DuPont-Lapeer Airport, I feel I need to give up my position on the Council to avoid any potential conflict of interest issues." Thanks, Dave, for everything you've done for the organization as a Council member and we look forward to you remaining an active member.

Membership, we need your help again. We're coming up short on people as well as funds. There are now several openings on the Council and the Treasurer's position is also open as of the first of the year. If we can't field enough officers and Council, we risk losing our charter. It won't matter if we have no money, we'll just cease to exist as a division. It's extremely important that as many people as possible attend our next Council/Membership meeting on January 13, 1999 at 7 pm. Again, our future could hinge on decisions made at this meeting; please attend if at all possible.

It appears at this time the national newsletter "*Yankee Wings*" will no longer be published. There are plans, however, to mail the Willow Run newsletter "*Hangar Happenin's*" to all members every other month. "*Hangar Happenin's*" has improved greatly over the past few months and has become an excellent newsletter. Also, they have asked for divisional material to include so the publication won't be just Willow Run news.

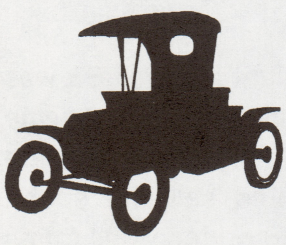
HH Editors' Note: The board has decided that the *Hangar Happenin's* will be mailed to all members every month starting with the January 1999 issue.

"Once upon a time"

by Truman James Fisher GN 01381 WR

It's Friday about 8:00 PM on January 19th, 1923 at Findlay, Ohio "HOME & HOSPITAL" when Doris Edna Johnson Fisher gave birth to a son to be named after each grandfather, Truman Perky Johnson and James "Jim" Fisher. Of course proud father, Marion Vincent Fisher, approved of all this since this was his first born and he had a lot to do with what was happening.

Well, we got the introduction out of the way. So now we get the kid thru school and he graduates from Bowling Green, Ohio High School at age 17 with no special fan-fare in 1940, but he made it—well, he played 3 years on the football team and had a bit part in the senior class play "Stage Door." Hollywood did not call, so he continued on in the Uhlman Shoe Store where he worked on Saturdays for peanuts, well enough to buy peanuts. Now full time and Assistant Manager (there were generally only two of us in store) he had, after climbing the flight of stairs to Mr. Uhlman's office and asking for a raise, reached the big figure of $20.00 a week—working 6 days a week. These raises came after the nerve to climb the stairs; and raises came at $2.00 a pop. Okay, I am getting to that: First, I must tell you I purchased a beat-up bicycle for $5.00 and did a beautiful complete restoration on it—red and white, a real "beaut" and I was proud of it. About this time a guy in the neighborhood found a Model "T" Ford 1924 model in a barn I could have thrown a stone at and hit it. But I knew nothing of the car. The guy was broke (most of us were—Depression) and he is driving the Ford around the block with no license plates. This is my break; I flag him down; he



nearly runs over me. Hey fella! Want to sell the Ford?? He is not eager. Look, I will give you my bicycle (which I am riding) and 15 bucks for the car. The bicycle did the trick—free because I figured he paid 10 or 15 bucks for the car. Deal done, I proceeded to remove paint and repainted car a shiny black. Looked great! About the same time, a friend "Duncan" at Buick garage said he would help me overhaul the engine. Together we did it and I gave him a carton of Chesterfields. Now the fun we had, "guys and gals" in the Ford, would take 6 pages more; so believe me that Ford ran good and went everywhere, even places it should not have gone—"LOVERS LANE." Word comes down south via Route 25 from the Detroit area that there is a huge new airplane factory being built in a place called "Willow Run." My good friend, Henry, the Model "T" man is putting up this plant to build a plane called the "B-24 LIBERATOR." Me having so much in common with Ford, I decide to give a week's notice to Louis at the shoe store and point myself north in the Model "T." I may have been 2 miles out of Bowling Green on Route 25 and I spot a decent looking guy with his thumb out. I had done a lot of hitch-hiking between Findlay and Bowling Green chasing a girl called Nancy; so with due respect for the man, I pulled over and said hop-in. Where do you think he's going? Yep—to Willow Run Bomber Plant. He is from West Virginia and as far south as that they had heard about Willow Run. We introduced ourselves: I am Truman from back there in Bowling Green. With his southern accent he tells me his name is Ernie Up-The-Grove. Well, hearing this I quickly wondered what kind of a hill-billy had I picked up. He was dressed nicely with a hat and carrying a bag—couldn't be all bad with a name like "Up-The-Grove." It was not long before in our 35-mile-an-hour travel (that's max for a "T" Ford), we were like old long-lost buddies.

Several stops for: where is Willow Run Bomber Plant?? we finally arrived at the gate where a nice guy in a new uniform directed us to "Personnel." "Believe It Or Not" they acted as if they really wanted us and shoved application forms under our noses and sat us down to write. It was like we looked half-way intelligent and our bodies were warm—so how soon can you come to work? Wow! We were prepared to sack up some place, but where? You two could maybe find room at the YMCA in Ann Arbor came a reply from a beautiful girl we had hoped would ask us to stay at her house. Good luck, you guys and report back here tomorrow at 8:00 AM as you start school to be a riveter. Yes, you get paid while you are in school for a couple of weeks learning how to drill a straight hole, fit a proper rivet, drive it home and buck the rivet on the backside. With good directions we found the "Y" on the square in Ann Arbor. Hello, you two, want rooms? We got them–$14.00 a week and you can use the swimming pool and gym anytime it's not in use by a group; wear your bathing suit! I grew up in the "Y" at Findlay and learned to swim in the raw. Ernie got a room and I got a room on different floors. Throw the bags in the room and let's case the place and look the town over. Well, Ann Arbor is two towns—Ann Arbor Town and University of Michigan Town: two personalities.

Each town had a major importance to our welfare—namely University Town has the Big Major Movie House (our entertainment source) and Uptown on the Square was the good medium-priced restaurant we could walk to. Most important—restaurant sold a $5.50 meal ticket for 5 bucks. On payday, always bought 4 tickets and knew I would eat 'til next payday and got $2.00 free. You had to think about these things—not living at home on Mom and Dad—free food and free room. Even with my weekly earnings tripled, I seemed to be more broke than ever. Gotta count your chickens! I am telling you Willow Run is bigger than big (well, you Michiganders know this). Ernie and I are together in school and getting good grades; in fact, we get kicked out early because we were doing something right. I am assigned to horizontal center wing to install

the curved to wing angle iron that the center section fuselage is attached to (you understand that?). I I have to get this correct or I may be sweeping the parking lot. Gotta drill the correct holes—countersink hole for #8 black ice box rivet and get it bucked before rivet warms up. Had a beautiful—I mean beautiful—gal for partner who bucked the rivets, only got to see her on break or at time clock. We were a pair on the rivets. She had a boyfriend in the Navy and I was not about to tangle with a Navy Commander and his 16-inch guns. Up-The-Grove had been assigned up-the-line to "nose section" and ended up on a different shift. We would pass in the night and maybe go to a show together on Sundays. I learned very early they had a beautiful cafeteria in the main up front office building. So another crazy riveter and I would skip off five minutes early and hike up to get a good and "I mean good" hot lunch-supper-whatever. We got away with this as we came dressed in sharp slacks and good looking sport shirts. Work was clean and why not look like an engineer or vice president. We did have to eat fast! (and that's not my style), chew each bite 22 times, Mom always said! It is 1942 and they are still putting finishing touches on the building I was working on the first wing to come down the line—I often wondered if it ever flew—more rivets in and out and sections replaced, seems some engineer was always changing something on the wing. Maybe they junked it or used it as a prop in the school? Yes, we traveled to work in the Model "T." We had a car pool—5 people each contributing $1.00 each week to driver who picked them up at their house. One guy we had to stop each night for him to get one or two jugs of wine. Always seemed okay the next day. We changed cars each week and shifts change after 4 weeks. Kinda mixed us up more than usual but we loved it. Men are leaving for the service and sooner or later you would be calling my name. Before this draft gets me: I had always wanted to be a fighter pilot since my first dollar ride in an airplane in Kalamazoo. So I find the Army Air Corps office in Detroit and to my surprise I pass the written exam and the physical exam. I am given a card saying I am in some kind of "RESERVE" and stand by, we will call or write you. Time marches on and now I am working in Center Section as an inspector. I think the union got me a raise. With time and half on Saturday for 4 hours I was getting a little over $65.00 a week—paid every two weeks when we showed our I.D. badge at pay window. We were presented with a brown envelope with record of all hours and deductions and cash inside—count it at the window and you were free to go spend. Ann Arbor to Willow Run and Bowling Green on long week-end (shift change) and the Model "T" threw 3 rods and sat on the street, for sale cheap. Some guy knew the problem (no lies here) and he gave me $35.00 for the car. Hey, I am going to go buy that 1936 Ford convertible with some savings and a loan from Dad (he was generally good for a touch). Dad's only question, why don't you buy a 4-door sedan and be practical? This is not a fighter pilot's style, Dad! Tires are blowing out on the car—2 at one time when I crossed a railroad track. Let it sit—stuck my thumb out—and a lady (could have been "Mother Theresa") picked me up and by going out of her way dropped me at Willow Run. Thank you "LADY!" With the help of a buddy we went to "Yipsi" and in center by water tower we pulled two 600x16s out of scrape pile and replaced the two blown tires. Yes, we put the two old ones in the scrape heap. We were kinda honest guys—you know! Here comes the official notice:

All Aviation Cadet Reserves —

Report xxx time on xxx day at the xxx railroad station ready to ride the train for 3 days to Miami Beach. OK! Dad sold the '36 Ford Convertible two weeks later for $200.00. Everyone was selling their car not thinking ahead. Some years back I saw the same car—same Washington blue and white top—with back seat, for sale $12,500.00. I was in another project and could

not buy it—I really had enough cars!

Ernie Up-The-Grove, if by chance you are in the crazy world and should read this story, Get-Out-Of-The-Grove and call me: (440) 237-1176. Yes, I will pay for the call!

Editors' Note: Visit the Yankee Air Museum—upstairs in the "Willow Run Room" in the showcase Truman is pictured in front of the YMCA in Ann Arbor wearing his "Willow Run" B-24 bomber jacket—no, that is not his Lincoln Zephyr.

WAR STORIES

James Beck, YAF #G1371WR. Marketing Communications Director, U-M, Ann Arbor. US Army, 1955-1958. Army Security Agency. Basic at Ft. Carson, CO, then Ft. Devens, MA. Six months at Camp Wellfleet, an anti-aircraft artillery range on Cape Cod. Then two years in 34th Signal Battalion, VII Corps Headquarters, Stuttgart-Moehringen, Germany.

While at Devens, I was assigned briefly to a Signal Corps air section since I had had three years of aircraft tech at Western Michigan University before being drafted. Our section went off to Ft. Hood, TX in the fall of '55 to take part in a big multi-national maneuver called *Operation Sagebrush*. Our section was based at a little grass strip in the middle of nowhere near Camp Polk, LA.

We had H-13s (Bell two-place helicopter), L-19 Bird Dogs (Cessna two-place liaison taildragger), and L-20s (the famous DeHavilland Beaver) for hauling equipment. I was one of two crewmen on an L-20.

My pilot had a lady friend about 30 miles up the road. He would sometimes fly up in the evenings to a grass strip near her place where she would meet him in a car. I would go along and sleep in the plane. He took me with him because I was a civilian pilot and could fly the plane back when he was too drunk. I was his designated flyer. I acquired about 10 hours of pilot-in-command time in a Beaver, illegally. We both could have ended up in Leavenworth.

When the maneuvers were over, we convoyed our trucks back to Devens, stopping overnight at Army bases on the way. One of them was Ft. McClellan, Alabama, which at that time was the WAC training base. We slept on our bedrolls in a gymnasium. The gym was surrounded by a walking guard of MPs. I asked one of the MPs if they were afraid we might get out. He said no, they were afraid the WACs might get in.

Kelly Barracks, our post in Moehringen, was a small college-like campus that had been a Luftwaffe HQ. In 1956 it housed (and still does) US Army VII Corps HQ. But since the Corps combat units were scattered around southern Germany, the only troops on post were those few essential to running the HQ. We didn't take soldiering too seriously.

At Kelly Barracks, the lowest job on the pole was being an MP. If you couldn't read or write, they made you a cook. If they couldn't make it as a cook, they made you an MP. They wouldn't let the MPs carry any weapons for fear they'd hurt somebody, including themselves. MPs were not allowed to wear their MP outfits off post. But they did man the gate. On Saturday nights, when the troops were out on the town, invariably some well-oiled GI would come strolling through the main gate after hours and, for the fun of it, deck the MP on duty.

We had these two crazy guys, Welcher and O'Brien, both buck sergeants. One night while we're out on maneuvers in the forests of Germany, they disappeared. We all knew they

had snuck into town, which was off limits, to have some beers.

About 3 AM, the MPs brought them in and, falling down with laughter, told this story: They were on patrol in the woods when they saw a pair of small wobbly headlights coming toward them down a trail. Here were Welcher and O'Brien, quite drunk, walking down a little dirt two-track, side by side, holding their flashlights out in front of them, saying "putt, putt, putt, putt," hoping the MPs would take them for a farm tractor.

One day we got a new CO. Very gung ho trooper. Which was a shock for us, not being too big on esprit. To start shaping us up, this new CO decreed that we get haircuts not longer than ¼ inch (like his).

We had this guy, Gerry, draftee, degree in English, who was about three weeks from the end of his tour. Smallish fellow, coke-bottle-bottom glasses. Looked like Mr. Peepers. Quiet guy, kept to himself, did what he was told, just tried to stay out of the way.

Most everybody was bugged by the haircut order, but Gerry decided to make a statement. He had his head shaved. Next day we're all sitting in the bleachers for a class. Gerry's sitting in the front row. The lieutenant teaching the class is also new, a hotshot, and decides to curry favor with the new CO ridiculing Gerry's haircut. He walks up to Gerry, runs his hand over his head and, smiling, loudly announces to the class, "Gee, this feels just like my wife's (bottom)."

Although basically peaceable, Gerry was no one to fool with. Without hesitation, he put his own hand up to his head, felt it, and said, "By golly, it sure does, sir."

EDITORS' NOTE: The preceding story was written by our "War Stories" editor. We hope that if you have an interesting story about a military experience you will submit it to *HANGAR HAPPENIN'S*. Jim is currently working on a couple other stories, and we would love to have yours.

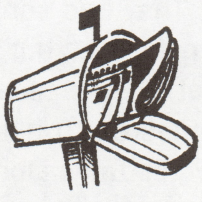
THE WINDS OF WAR

A little-known event partially paralyzed America's Strategic Air Command's long-range nuclear bomber force in 1952. At the time of the Cold War's beginning, half of our B-36 bomber force was damaged or destroyed, and the public barely knew about it. The sneak attack was a costly one that has gone unheralded.

Labor Day, September 1, 1952, dawned a hot, sunny day at the Fort Worth, Texas, Carswell AFB. By mid-afternoon, Texas-size thunderstorms were brewing in the area. Out of one of these, the sneak attack came. Mother Nature dropped a tornado from a cloud that suddenly raced across the airfield. Winds at 300+ mph attacked the Peacemaker bombers on the tarmac. The take-off speed of a B-36 was under 200 mph. The winds picked up and moved the 150-ton aircraft as if they were in flight. Within minutes, the airfield was shattered. America was dealt a sudden blow by the so-called **"Russian Tornado"** of 1952.

(continued next page)

Imagine how safe the Cold War's general public would have felt if they had known that half of the U. S.'s intercontinental bomber force was put out of action in one afternoon. The little-known event was kept rather quiet at a time when mass hysteria may have resulted. Mother Nature's sneak attack on SAC on Labor Day, 1952 was a very costly, and quiet one indeed.



WE GET LETTERS – and e-mail!

Dear Bill,

Please wish all the members a Happy Holiday wish from Betty and I. Things have been going wonderfully for us down here. I hope you have been getting my e-mail messages. Here is another patch for your collection. I just found it and I bought it for YAF. So – enjoy the holidays in good health.

Bill Bottle

Dear Editors,

I was delighted to read the article "Volunteers – A Profile – Bill Abbott #232 in the August 1998 issue. It was a well written and interesting bit of information. I enjoyed it so much - you see "Bill" as you call him, is my brother. He's a bit OK. I was equally pleased to see his picture and article in Dec. 1998.

Ruth Barlow

Ed. Note – this was an unsolicited but very biased assessment of what we all think is a very special person. We must be right, if his sister thinks so too!

I like the new newsletter, but you all know better than anyone how hard it is to put one out as often as you are going to.

I thought the members might find my bit of news interesting, especially since I grew up in Ypsilanti and so lots of people know me.

Recently a mystery novel of mine was published. It is called "The Labcoat" and features a Vietnam Veteran turned detective. Hillsboro Press is the publisher. The book can be purchased through bookstores or by calling the publisher at (800) 321 – 5692.

The book has received some good attention. For example Robert Tanenbaum, a famous mystery writer, says "The Labcoat" is "Wonderfully magnetic. Draws the reader in and holds on tight."

More can be learned about the book at www.mysterynovel.com

All the best,
Larry Soderquist GN 02898 WR

Ed. Note – As in the previous issue this is not intended to solicit your business, nor to indicate an endorsement for the book.

FYI - What it takes to produce a newsletter.

By Bob Seaton

The other day several of the staff of YOUR newsletter were having dinner and a "cold pop", and were discussing how hard it is to put the newsletter together. Someone suggested that maybe that would be of some interest to the readers - so here goes!

As we are now mailing the newsletter out to all Yankee members every month, we have had to move our deadline up by one week. To most of you, that shouldn't seem like much; but to us, it causes many problems. The first problem is "How much material are we going to have?"

Our second problem, especially if we have a particularly long piece, is "Can we get it typed on time?" The last problem is "What happens if something big comes up on the last week? Should that be included?"

As most of you are aware, we have, for over a year now, been producing the newsletter on a computer. This makes it somewhat easier, but also causes many problems that were not encountered when Bill Abbott and Evelyn Rouse did it by "cutting and pasting". The first problem is "How to get a piece that has been hand written or typed into the computer?" We have been fortunate in this area, having had Mary Ann (flying fingers) Bittner join our staff. Mary Ann types at a very rapid speed and has been invaluable to us. Of course another big problem is "What do you write that will be interesting to the most of our readers?" When the newsletter was started many years ago - No Bill, I'm not saying you're old! - most of the stories came from Bill Abbott, Evelyn Rouse, Roger Peterson and the now famous Connie Kosek of *Connie's Corner*. Daniel Tomczak joined the group and has been performing yeoman's service ever since. Dan was the one who got me involved with the newsletter, and I'll never forgive him (just kidding)!

When the newsletter got done on the computer, we needed more things to put in it. One of the ideas was to have someone write about the airshows that we attend. The first of these last year was the "Southern Exposure" tour. We knew who was going. We needed a "sucker" to take on the job. The person we were able to hook was Don Burke. We have since decided that we created a monster with this one (kidding again). The story that Don did turned out so well, we decided to do this for every show. Some of the people who wrote were from our staff, yours truly and Daniel Tomczak. We also got Bette Watson and Kevin T. Walsh to help. During this time, many of you saw that the newsletter was turning out well and contributed pieces, big and small. I am unable to list everyone here who did; but, to all of you, the staff owes a great deal of gratitude!

When the decision was made to mail out *Hangar Happenin's* to the Willow Run membership, this brought up another series of problems. Who could and would print up the mailing labels? The membership office came through, with some help from Erwin Sternweis. How would we get the newsletter into the mail system? John and Donna Day came to the rescue. John and Donna Day had been involved with the mailing of "*Wings*" and they were asked to help with *Hangar Happenin's*. They had some of the people who helped them before, but it soon became very evident that they needed more help. The staff of HH volunteered to help, and now Bill, Evelyn, Mary Ann, yours truly, along with Cynthia Brodnax, and Marvin Hoffrichter, on the 3rd Saturday of every month, have gotten together to affix the mailing labels to over 2000 newsletters every month. Donna has all the labels organized, and each of us is able then to work efficiently and complete this task in about an hour.

One thing about the way we produce the newsletter that probably will never go right, is the setting up in the computer. It never fails that on the last day, at the last minute, I usually do something stupid and the computer crashes. We lose some of our work. The computer guys Bill Colwell and Erwin Sternweis are always reminding me: Save, Save, Save! Of course sometimes I don't and the do do hits the fan at the wrong time! This means that instead of getting it done on Saturday, it must be completed on Sunday, and taken to Bill Abbott's home so he can get it to the printers on time.

It is my hope that this gives you an idea of the number of people involved and what is necessary to produce **your** newsletter. It is all worth the effort though because of the many kind comments that we have received. It is pretty obvious to us that the membership of the YAF,

like all organizations, needs to be kept informed. Bill Abbott and his crew knew this when they started HH. They were unable, because they lacked the help and the technology, to produce what is now produced. However, the outcome is still the same: keep people informed. You will generate enthusiasm and more involvement. The staff wants to thank all those who have made contributions and comments. Keep the stories coming, and if you don't like something, let us know!

Aircraft Ground Schools – Randy Hotton

The 1999 Airshow Season will probably start in early spring for the YAF. It is time to start thinking about our required ground schools. The FAA has made additions to required training needed to qualify for the flex ride exemption. This is going to necessitate more ground school. In order to give this additional training, the ground school will be increased to two days. We are going to offer a one-day class of general subjects. The general subjects course, covering FAR's, Airspace, Cockpit Resource Management, and General Emergency Training, will be given on two different days. Then one additional day of training for the B-17 and one day of training for the C-47 will be required to qualify as a crewmember in a particular airplane. Following is the 1999 schedule YAF ground training:

DATE:	SUBJECT:	TIME:
Saturday 2/6	General Subjects	0900 to 1600
Saturday 3/6	General Subjects	0900 to 1600
Saturday 3/20	B-17 Systems & Procedures	0900 to 1600
Saturday 4/10	C-47 Systems & Procedures	0900 to 1600

These ground school classes will be held at **Wayne County Community College** at the corner of Tyler Road and Haggerty Road.

NEW COMPUTERS

Bill Colwell, of our computer group, has managed to arrange a donation of fifteen *486* computers, monitors and printers from EDS. This means that we will be able to upgrade all of the museum's computers to at least one *486* machine operating at a speed of 33Mhz on each desk. The monitors and the printers both are a significant upgrade over the machines that are currently in use around the museum.

Before the computers will be placed in service, each of them will be cleaned, checked to insure that they function properly and the appropriate software is loaded onto them. This donation puts all into the 1990s. Thanks, Bill! Thanks, EDS!

Don Burke

73RD BOMB WING ASSOCIATION

will be holding their next reunion in Tucson, Arizona, at the *Holiday Inn Palo Verde,* April 22, 23, and 24, 1999. You must register for the reunion before February 28, 1999. Please call or write the 73rd Bomb Wing Association at:

649 Balmoral Road
Winter Park FL 32789-5204
(407) 644-1891
or e-mail to: Joe Simonds@Juno.com

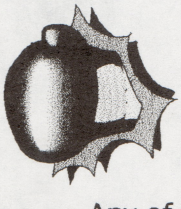
"The Greatest Aircraft Ever Built"

My brother (a fellow YAF member) and I have lived on the opposite sides of Michigan for the last 40+ years, so we do most of our corresponding by phone. We had a friendly sibling rivalry over our different World War II AAF occupations; Bill had been a B-24 Radio Operator/Gunner, while I had been a B-29 Turret System Mechanic. Bill would invariably open our conversations with "You know, of course, that the B-24 was the greatest aircraft ever built"; and I would invariably respond with "Hogwash! The B-29 was the only aircraft capable of delivering the atom bomb, and ending the war."

This went on for nearly 40 years, until one day when I saw a Letter to the Editor in the *Wall Street Journal*. The writer lambasted General Dynamics Corp. for donating a million dollars toward the restoration of the B-24 "All-American." He very strongly felt that the money would have been better spent on a memorial to the poor illegitimates who had to fly the things. He went on to call the B-24 every malediction that had ever been applied to any airplane. In closing, he identified himself as a pilot from my brother's squadron.

So much for a 40-year-old family tradition.

Jim Connolly SL 02747 WR



....OR ELSE!!! POW-RIGHT IN THE KISSER!!!!!

Any of you who have visited the shop in the Hangar have noticed that it is clean and neat. Barry Vance and some of his little helpers have done all this work. They would like all to know that any of you A&P types or other mechanical wiz kids, should clean up any mess you make, and put things back where you found them. Barry has assured this publication that anyone who does not follow this request will be dealt with in ways that we are not at liberty to divulge.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE HANGAR by Daniel Tomczak

AIRCRAFT UPDATE

B-17

The airplane is in the middle of its annual inspection. One of the major activities is the total inspection of the landing gear. The inspection is done every year, but this year the inspection was very intense. This is because another flying B-17 (*9-0-9*) found a crack in one axle. The news of this potential problem was passed to all B-17 operators. The *Yankee Lady*'s landing gear and axles were thoroughly inspected. After all of the tests, the end result is that the landing gear are in excellent shape. Additional restoration and maintenance work includes: rework and repair of the cowl flaps, new paint and upholstery on the seats, repainting of the interior and de-icer boots, replacement of the Auxiliary Power Unit plug, addition of defroster tubes in the tail turret, ammo track to the tail guns and the addition of oxygen bottles under the cockpit.

C-47

The annual inspection is about half finished with the expert work of crew chief Fred Lockwood and assistant Terry Little and other crew members . The repair on the trailing edge has been completed. Additional repair work involved patching some extra static ports that were used during the ERIM research activities. The floor was also removed to do a complete inspection.

Lodestar

Restoration work continues with the bead blasting of the interior. This is being headed by Kevin Walsh. Additional work includes repairing the horizontal stabilizer and sheet metal repairs on the fuselage.

CG-4A Glider

The class on fabric recovery of the control

surfaces is going well. One elevator is almost finished and the workmanship is fantastic. Soon work will start on the other elevator. The class is being held every Saturday morning and all members can attend and learn the almost lost art of aircraft fabric recovering.

YOV-10

Both fuselage sponsons have been painted and installed. Machine guns and additional armament pods have been added. The airplane looks like it is ready for combat. Work is progressing on the propellers which are almost ready for paint and decals.

TF-102

Work is progressing in preparation for painting this summer. So far the nose and tail are painted.

Pratt & Whitney R-985

Crew members Hank Koivunen, Dave Lowry, Bob Pilz, John DeMay, and Charlie Jackson have taken the surplus R-985 aircraft engine and restored it to static display. The engine was taken apart, cleaned, painted and put back together. It now looks like new. It will make a nice addition to the engine display room.

FROM FLYING BOATS TO BOMBERS

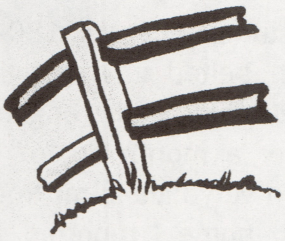
by Harry J Dicken GN 02901 WR

I was a Lieutenant senior grade and a Navy pilot. I flew quite a few different planes, but mostly the PBM flying boat. I was in a squadron. The subs were sinking ships close to shore; you could see them burning at night. They called for volunteers to change to B-24s and I went for it as I was tired of sitting in the plane for one-half hour to an hour for a boat to pick us up; I really wanted something faster and one that comes back to land. I had 51 missions out of Africa and England. My 52nd mission: just took off, engines lost power, getting about 10' up, and I hit a stump at about 180-170 mph and even though belted in, my right knee hit the pedestal for the throttle gear , engine, etc. I was sent home after a month or so. I received the Air Medal plus a very nice letter from the skipper. After a month home I reported to Norfolk, Virginia, Hampton Roads. There were two of us who could fly 24s and we went N-S-&-E picking up war wearies and some new to take out west. One just wouldn't fly well and I couldn't gain altitude. I made a landing and cussed out the duty officer; got the scales, weighed the plane, and calculated the center of gravity. I put 600 lbs of sand near the tail and it flew perfectly. They couldn't believe I could do this; but I had done this to many PBY-5As going to the Russians. After that, any plane I picked up I made a high-speed run down the runway. Well, one needs a few thrills. I came home OK only to have a drunk run the stop at Bemis Road. This was before US 23 was moved through a field. I had my back ruptured at the pelvis and I still enjoy cussing the SOB as it is quite troublesome.

FYI – This publication has received recently a paper written by Barry Vance for his employer Ford Motor Company in 1991. This describes Military Production here at Willow Run and the Rouge Plant. You will be seeing some of it's contents in Past Dates of Interest on page 2. In addition – one of our staff has an inside track with Mr. Vance and has come up with BARRY'S BRAINBUSTERS! The following is the first installment.

There was enough concrete poured in the original Willow Run Airport runways and taxiways to make a 2-lane highway ? ? ? miles long?

Answer to be found ? (you have to look hard!!!)



OVER THE FENCE

by J.D. Hill

When I think back on the things that inspired me to learn to fly, I have to credit two television shows. One was a show called Whirlybirds, in which they flew Bell 47's. I was already hooked on my desire to be a rotor driver. The other was Sky King. Those Cessna twins meant more to me than the very attractive little girl that lived next door. Well, at that age anything was better than girls.

The other thing that I remember was the need to serve the country, which you can guess, made me an oddball in the late 60's. Another thing someone said was it is easier to fly over a battlefield than walk through one. So early in my career, I tested to get into Warrant Officer Candidate School.

The greatest thing I learned, and that stayed with me, came early in my aviation education. Anyone who has ever taken rotorcraft training know that you are at your dumbest your first few lessons.

So after a day of bouncing across, sliding across, or generally scraping the skid tubes along the ramp, my instructor looked at me from beneath his helmet with that "Why Me?" look and said these words: "Mr. Hill have you ever looked up in your life?" I said sure I've looked up.

"Then in that case it seems you missed the message." "What message?" I asked.

"In case no one told you, the sky is that way, Mr. Hill. And I suggest you go it cause it ain't gonna come to you."

I hear those words to this day.

'BROSE

At the last Yankee Air Force holiday party, Ambrose Connelly was presented a plaque. This was to thank him for his many years of service to the Yankee Air Force. Ambrose recently announced his retirement as crew chief on the B-25. He is moving to a warmer climate. His skill and dedication will be missed.

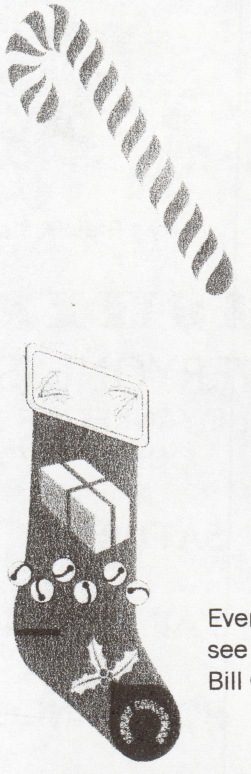
Ambrose served with the Marine Corps during World War II, enlisting on December 17, 1941. He was stationed in the Pacific theater, mainly on Bouganville. He worked as a aviation mechanic, with the main aircraft being the Douglas SBD dive bomber.

After the war, Ambrose returned to Texas and became involved with the then new helicopter. He gained his pilot license. He was one of the first people to experiment herding cattle with a helicopter. During the early trials, the horseback cowboys loved the helicopter and what it could do. But when the cowboys realized that the helicopters could do a better job than they could, they were not as happy with the helicopters. But Ambrose really enjoyed flying and working on aircraft. In the course of his career, he had over 10,00 hours flying helicopters. In addition he gained his Commercial pilots license, instrument license in helicopters, Airframe and Powerplant (A & P) and Inspection Authorization (AI) mechanic licenses.

Ambrose moved from Texas to Michigan after his retirement and joined the Yankee Air Force in 1990. His first project was the restoration of the Bell 47 helicopter that was owned by the Marine Corps. His extensive talent was realized and he was soon assigned as crew chief for the B-25. The B-25 had recently been purchased from Glen Lamont. It was flyable but needed a lot of work to restore it to the Yankee Air Force's standards. Ambrose spent many long hours at the hangar. The fruits of his labors came when the B-25 first flew again in June 1991. Since that first flight, Ambrose has kept the airplane in fantastic flying shape. It will be very hard to find a replacement crew chief that has Ambrose's skill and dedication.

Do you recognize this person?

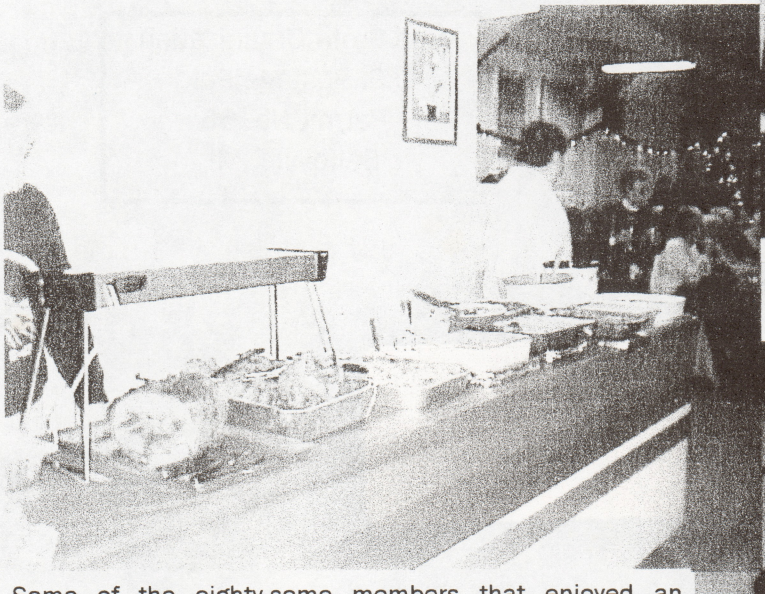
Now we're sure that you got the one from last month – right? If you want the answer it is on page 2. This month if you guess who it is you will win the March issue of *Hangar Happenin's* delivered to your door by the USPS. Best of luck -this is not a prize to be laughed at!!!!



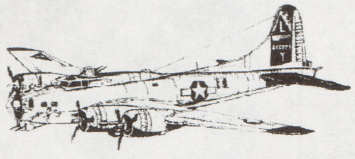
Even Santa flew in for our party! Did anyone see his sleigh parked on the ramp? Photo by Bill Colwell

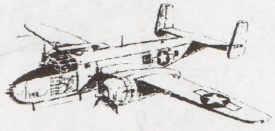
YAF 1998 CHRISTMAS PARTY

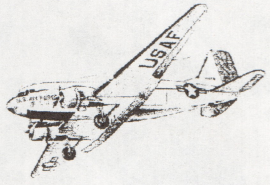
DECEMBER 19, 1998



Some of the eighty-some members that enjoyed an evening of good food and good conversation. Can you find yourself in these pictures. Photos by the Little Kids, Terry and Lori.







Barry's BrainBuster answer – 120 Miles

POLISHING PARTY

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

HELP POLISH THE YANKEE AIR FORCE B – 17 "*YANKEE LADY*",
OUR C – 47 AND B –25.

WHEN: SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 1999

WHERE: YAF HANGAR AT WILLOW RUN AIRPORT

TIME: POLISHING STARTS AT 9:00 AM

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!!

(IN CASE OF BAD WEATHER WILL BE MOVED TO MARCH 27, 1999)

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